Selected Topic in History

Amorium City

Archeology in Byzantium

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HIST 435

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Byzantium Archeology in Anatolia

Example: *Amorium City*

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Abstract

This paper has been written for explaining Amorium City in Byzantium time by using archeological evidences. Archeology has been very essential tool in order to understand the life rituals, style and the living condition thanks to architecture style. It is able to be figured out many important judgments about antiquity, such as political situation, family life, most popular culture etc. This paper is going to take a hand Amorium City so that audiences are going to have much information about time and space.

"Amorium is the longest ongoing British excavation ever conducted in Turkey. Work at Amorium started in 1987 under the directorship of the late Prof. R. Martin Harrison of the University of Oxford. There have been field seasons every year since (with the exception of 1999, and 2010–2012), making a total of 22 years to date. The team of archaeologists, surveyors, conservators, and students that works at Amorium is very international. In recent years, for example, there have been as many as 40 team members from 10 different countries, and all of them participated in a single integrated programme of work." (The Amorium Excavations Project, 2012, p. 1)

Introduction

A concept of "past" has been always very important for both individual by self and whole society, and, past could be examined by excavation and history. History is able to show

us what has been left behind by past mankind, however, archeology, excavation method is able to talk to us and show us the figures as if they are still living (Şimşek, 2011). So, we are able to say that archeology is a scientific study which provides us to see unwritten history. It gives us entrance to very large image of human history (Lepper, 2006).

In this paper, it is going to be mentioned about archeological discoveries of Amorium city which has been very important city for Byzantium in Medieval Age.

Before going to explanation of Amorium, I would like to summarize what we are going to be encountered in the city and what we should to figure out.

Amorium city has been a capital city, well organized "urban" city example and, military life, religious life and social life has experienced themselves (orderly) city walls, churches and cathedrals, upper – lower city differentiation and agricultural areas, theatres, agoras, bathrooms so on. We are going to be examined these from Ivison's chapter (2007).

Amorium City: Short History

In the mid seventh century, it has been corporate office of the Army of the Anatolics, and its strategic importance has become higher and major. Army of the Anatolics used to be largest Byzantine army which placed in Anatolia in order to avoid Arab attacks. In 646 A.D., first Arab attack has occurred in Amorium, after this attack, city has got the important role for defense of Byzantine and Christian world as whole. Leo III (r. 717- 41, first of the Iconoclastic emperors of Byzantium), Michael II (r. 820 -29), Theophilus (r. 829- 42, last Iconoclastic emperor) and Michael III (r. 842- 67) have constituted the known Amorian Dynasty today, and the destruction of the city of Amorium has been come up in Theophilus period. In August 838, Arab attacked to city and sacked it (Lightfoot, n.d.). We are going to be seen this in detail on next parts of paper.

Amorium was Byzantium city between sixth and eleventh century, it has placed in central western Anatolia, located at Hisarköy where is modern Turkish village, near Emirdağ and Afyonkarahisar (Lightfoot, n.d.). Now it is called “Afyon”.

Amorium City: Excavations and Discoveries

Archeology has been a knowledge to figure out every kind of detail (as possible as can be found), and the working in Amourium has been a key for getting the remarkable information about economic and social life.

Excavations started in 1988 by directing of Professor R. Martin Harrison and the sponsored by the British Institute at Ankara and Adelaide and Milton Fr Groot Fund at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Leon Levy Foundation, the Loeb Classical Library Foundation (Lightfoot, n.d.).

Why Amoruium has been chosen was that today’s Afyon is a place where the modern life has not come by and built. There is a huge area which never functioned by machine and this welcomes the researchers in order them to make foundations.

I wish to give a place for Lightfoot’s own report of little part of excavations, after that, we are going to be seen in detail of the foundations.

“*In 2005, excavations were carried out in three sectors of the site, two in the Lower City and one in the western necropolis. Work continued in the area known as the Lower City Enclosure and exposed the well-preserved remains of two grape-treading vats, both dated to the earlier part of the Dark Ages (7th–8th century). The walls of one of these vats had been dismantled during the middle Byzantine period, when new structures were constructed in the same area, but its floor was left largely intact and so was found complete with its stone spout and drainage basin still in situ. The other vat, however, was preserved to a considerable*

height and showed that it had been converted to store grain before it was destroyed by fire. Next to the same installation, a stretch of unpaved street was exposed. Its surface was also covered with layers of ash and roof collapse. From its size and orientation, the street would seem to suggest that some elements of the late Roman city plan had survived until the 9th century. In conjunction with these exciting developments in the Enclosure, further efforts were made to understand better the area's complex stratigraphy and the phasing of its numerous structures. A detailed plan, color-coded for clarity, was drawn up and scrupulously checked on site. This had the added benefit of confirming the presence of a widespread and consistent destruction layer that should probably be associated with a major historical event, namely the siege and sack of Amorium in 838.

Work also continued in the Lower City Church. To the north of the main body of the church an entire baptistry was excavated at its western end. This formed part of the original early Byzantine (5th–6th century) ecclesiastical complex and included a sunken cruciform font at its center. The baptistry remained in use throughout the Byzantine period, but in the 10th–11th century the font was filled in and paved over. Three tombs, one in the baptistry and two in its narthex, were added at that time and match the series of tombs previously excavated in the main narthex of the church. Evidence was also found for subsequent use of the area by Seljuk Turkish settlers in the 13th century.

In conjunction with the enlarged excavations at the Church, the program of conservation and restoration of its surviving fabric was carried forward energetically in 2005. A stone yard was created to the south of the Church, where fragments of columns, windows, door sections (jambs, lintels, etc), and other pieces could be identified and prepared for reassembly. As a result, one doorjamb from the northeastern corner of the Church was repaired and hoisted back into position. The effects of the harsh Anatolian winter on the jamb will be monitored in the coming season.

The third area of excavation focused on the investigation of a tomb in the western necropolis. It was found to comprise four compartments constructed reusing earlier Roman funerary stelae of the Phrygian door stone type. Its appearance and contents suggest that it was an early Christian tomb complex (5th–6th century), clearly used for some considerable time. Finds included two terracotta mold-made lamps and parts of two bronze reliquary crosses. As well as disturbance caused by the insertion of additional burials, the complex had been looted in more recent times (pre-1930s) and so the precise dates for its construction and use remain uncertain." (Lightfoot, 2006, p. 1).

I would like to citied this report in order to grasp the technique part of excavations. For the next part of paper, we are going to be examined Lower City, Upper City, city walls, Lower City Church and social life buildings of Amorium.

Amorium: Byzantine Urbanism

According to Ivison (2007), archeology has got very important place for observing and commenting cities' growth and decline, the urban economy and the nature everyday life etc.

It would be better to remind that excavations have been processed until to 2012 and Ivison has prepared "development and economy of the Anatolian city of Amorium during the period of the so called Byzantine Dark Ages (seventh to ninth centuries)" (Ivison, 2007). I have mentioned the location of Amorium before, according to that, it needs to be said the city was very important for military power and administrative center during Dark Ages. The reason of that city has been considered so is because of its location. Its closeness to the central regions of country area and its safety thanks to mountains has provided a powerful space for military and administrative powers (Ivison, 2007).

Amorium city's location which is in a strategic nexus of highways and the topography that it owns has made it both useful as a capital and self prevented place from the attacks, and

Emirdağları which surrounds the city, has been used for sending people who have not placed in wars and bishop, this strengths the idea of serving protection to the city. City was very fruitful in fresh water, according to excavations, wells provided city's water demand in medieval period. The city used to have same climate which is continental as whole Anatolia, this means vegetable and animal were both proper for living (Ivison, 2007). Bishop Leo described it so;

"*You see, we do not produce olive oil; this is something we have in common with all the residents of the Anatolikon theme. Our land does not yield wine because of the high altitude and the short growing season. Instead of wood, we use zarzakon, which is really dung that has been processed, a thoroughly disgusting and smelly business. All the other requisites for the healthy or infirm we solicit from the Thrakesion theme, from Attaleia, and from the capital itself.*" (Ivison, 2007, p. 34).

City developed in late antiquity (4th and 5th century) well. As Lightfoot has mentioned "Lower City" has named by referring today's Hisarköy. Architectural parts have shown us public buildings were extending and as well as extramural necropolis, and excavations also proved the extension by Lower City, Lower City Church and Large Buildings etc (Ivison, 2007).

The Enclosure, Lower City and Lower City Church, Upper City

The Lower City walls which were defensive walls, has placed in south and east of the Upper City. In order to have well development accordance to expansion, new kind of street systems have been constructed and thanks to topographical situation, defensive walls also have been defended with the little hills around. By the way, it is necessary to say that upper city used to be for governmental, and lower city used to be for residential. Thanks to these defensive factor, Amorium has been a headquarter place. Approximately, at the same dates

with the city walls (triangle walls); Christian Basilica also has constructed which is Lower City Church. The recent works has figured out that church and its complexity has been constructed in one phase (late fifth and early sixth centuries.) Even though this large buildings' little part has been excavated, it could be understood that it was a part of something very large (Ivison, 2007).

Enclosures have seen with the bathhouses and its district which surrounded it. As an architecturally, "six marble columns with basket capitals probably supported a shallow dome at centre." (Ivison, 2007, p. 37), "The rooms of the bathhouse proper were similarly decorated" (Ivison, 2007, p. 38). Bathhouses' designation has brought the comment that they were public establishment. (Ivison, 2007). I am going to be back to bathhouses later.

With the development of city in Dark Ages, it could be said that city try to be considered as Constantinople and Nicaea where they have also city walls and basilicas. Amorium city's wall used to function as an imperial authority and inhabitant rather than protection.

City walls and churches are older structures for an imperial city, but they used as an authority in Dark Ages. These walls and churches have placed very important role for defense of enemy, especially Arabs. As an addition to their protection mission, on the other hand, they spread an ideological sights and reminded majesty of Empire. Lower city walls used to perform a gateway and connection to the main streets. In addition to the walls, there have found forty four towers too (Ivison, 2007). Evidences have shown that, very organized Byzantine Tower city has been getting value through Seljuk and Ottoman period (www.kulturbilinci.org, n.d.).

Lower City Basilica which was originally built in the early Byzantine period (fifth–sixth century)[1] was a monumental structure in the city; it was not only building but the complexity with the rooms and terrace. It has been used for three hundred years. This monumental basilica used to connect Amorium to other monumental Byzantine churches (Ivison, 2007). "Amorium antik kentinin amacı İstanbul'dan sonra Anadolu'nun Bizans'ın ikinci büyük kenti olmasını sağlamak" (Akdoğan, 2014, p. 1) (The purpose of the ancient Amorium city is providing that Anatolia would be the second biggest city in the Byzantium, after first one Istanbul). This sentence is from one the panel and has been said by Turkish archeologists.

Upper City was an inner citadel. The separation of districts such as lower and upper has presented that it was organization which derives governmental demands, as we know that upper city used to use for protecting the offices of the administration (Ivison, 2007).

Bathhouses

So far, we have mentioned about the military characteristics of the city and the living areas. Now, we are moving to the daily life and tradition culture with the bathhouses.

There have found districts which belong to bathhouses, very close to Lower City Basilica. "On the southern side of the bathhouse there appears to have been a large courtyard, flanked by large buildings of the fifth to sixth centuries to the west and south. A Street may be postulated to the east, facing the main entrance on that side. The bathhouse itself apparently functioned through the seventh and first half of the eighth century, but underwent major changes in the later eighth century" (Ivison, 2007, p. 44).

Bathhouses have not decayed during 7th and 8th century, instead, they have been repaired and protected (Ivison, 2012). Findings about bathhouses have shown some clues

[1] (Lightfoot, n.d.)

about public and private life. Pressing grapes areas have placed around the bathhouses, for wine. This also has shown that the major part of industry was on producing wine (Lightfoot, n.d.).

Destruction of the City

The fire… The fire has been an end of Dark Age Amorium where the significant findings have been reached. However, it has also provided for other little findings such as coins, valuable personal possessions like pearl or gold earrings etc. By the way, thanks to the coins, the period of fire could be determined (Lightfoot, n.d.). *"… in 2008, the remains of two victims of the sack were uncovered. One, probably a man, was found with a large gash through his skull, lying on his back in the main street. It would seem that he was struck down as he tried to flee, and it is likely that he was an innocent civilian since no weapons or armor were found on the body."* (Lightfoot, n.d., p. 1).

A huge area which burned by fire has been reached in 2003 – 2004 excavation season, near the bathhouses, and the evidence for last usage of bathhouses in earl ninth century (it could be determined by coins, that one belongs to Michael II, 821- 829). In this season, findings have been a little accumulation about their material culture such as glassware, metalwork etc. On the other hand, Lower City Church also has destroyed by fire (Ivison, 2007).

Arabs have attacks many time to Amorium, and many of them has been repulsed in a successful way, and, according to archeological evidences, evolution and transformation has been observed, rather than discontinuity; *"The archaeological evidence gathered so far suggests an evolutionary process characterized by a mix of trends: the maintenance of important structures, the dismantling of those no longer needed; the adaptation and renovation of others; the recycling of building materials; the continuing importance of the*

late antique urban framework; the redevelopment of formerly public space. This picture suggests evolution and transformation rather than discontinuity." (Ivison, 2007, p. 54).

..To sum up for the Dark Age Amoruim

Amorium, today's Afyon, is very proper to make an archeological research, because no kinds of modern facilities or building have been built there. There is a large area which can be functioned in any way, luckily researcher have found there! So, Excavations have been taken twenty two years, 1987 to 2012. I tried to transmit the information in best way I could do. If I may sum up all the knowledge that I cover;

Amorium has been a important place for Byzantium, both for strategic purposes and urbanization figure for Byzantium in Dark Age. Its location has been provides a good strategic position, it used to be close to Constantinople and Ancyra. It was surrounded by little hills and Emirdağları, this was its natural protection. However, city has been organized as Upper and Lower City, Upper City was for inner citadel and Lower City was for residential. Lower City has had Lower City church and this was very monumental thing for the city.

We are able to figure out city's social, military and religious life with the knowledge. There were city walls in Lower City; this was the military strategy for protecting the city from the enemies, especially Arabs. There was Lower City Basilica, it meant there has been Christianity in high numerous, and bathhouses, wine making places and cemeteries were the part of social life. Especially bathhouses were very important clue about social life. Dimension of bathhouses told us that those were public baths like *hammams*[2]

The destruction of the city has begun with fire and Arab Attacks in 838 made city finish, as a Byzantine.

[2] Turkish Bathroom for public

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